

Intervention Women Major Group

Rio+20 Informals, 30 May 2012, NY

Thank you Chairs,

My name is Nozipho Wright, from Botswana. I work with Energia – an International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, – and I speak on behalf of the Women’s Major Group

On the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment section, which is upcoming – we first of all want to congratulate the many delegations which have supported strong language throughout the draft document, and are glad to see that gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable development are recognized as key to the future we all want!

However, the past 20 years have shown us that gender equality often remains an empty term, if we do not create the necessary policy priorities, targets and instruments.

We therefore call on all delegates here, to support specific language in this section, on national mechanisms to promote gender equality, and to set targets for 40% women in leadership positions, with the aim of finally achieving parity. We propose to add this language to the last sentence of paragraph Gender 2.

On the mining section: although the text states that mining activities should have social and economic benefits and limit negative environmental impacts, studies show that environmental degradation is inherent in mining, and results in negative impacts on human health. Women are often particularly affected by pollution, social disintegration, and sometimes violence.

And because the majority of mining company profits do not remain in the local communities, it often leaves communities impoverished.

We call on all delegates to support the language in Mining 2 on strengthening the legal and regulatory frameworks, policy and practices for the mining sector including effective safeguards especially for women, local communities and indigenous peoples. We support the Indigenous Peoples and call to add a reference to “free and prior informed consent”.

Regarding the Education Section, paragraph 2, dealing with curricula on sustainability, we urge governments to refer to the 45th session of the Commission on Population and Development, OP 26 outcome document which was agreed here only 1 month ago, -- a historic agreement!

We propose to add from the OP26 language the following:

- develop educational strategies for young people to eliminate gender stereotypes in all spheres of life and achieve gender equality in political life and decision-making”

- provide young people with comprehensive sexuality education

And finally, on harmful chemicals and waste, including e-waste. These often cause birth-defects and irreversible and long-term health damage to women and children. The women's major group calls for a strong re-commitment to the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle. Moreover, the primary responsibility to address damages and fund cleanup should come from industry contributions.

Thank you chair.